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Following a guide to the city I live in written by an author significant enough to have a commemorative bronze plaque affixed to the apartment building she lived in while writing a book turned play turned movie, I spent my spring on pilgrimages to see things that many travel here to see.

April 9

I walked across a bridge to where two towers used to stand in the late seventies nearly finished and still surrounded by construction equipment. Fifty years later I had a profound experience of watching the monument's water fall into eternity like the thousands of names surrounding it. The nearby museum hosts long lines to see the fall up close, and

the new tower carries tourists up to a new roof-like experience. I used to work in that tower, commuting past the long lines to sit in meetings, paying attention to nothing except for the ghosts in the sky outside.

April 15

After a long subway ride, I basked in empty park paths winding under tree blossoms and singing birds until I remembered my vulnerability in vacant spaces, even in mid-morning daylight. The building-as-museum atop the hill, taken from transported and reconstructed French abbeys, was once used as a backdrop for a short film by Maya Deren. It was now a backdrop for my note-taking in the



medieval medicinal garden so I could build my own cloister in the middle of a big angry city.

May 3

When I saw the flags of the world lined up in alphabetical order outside the headquarters for world peace, I thought of the paparazzi photo of Greta Garbo walking under them. The photograph was probably taken by her decade-long stalker who stood around the same cul de sac I quickly walked around because I didn't want to offend her even just to take a tourist photo of a building she no longer lived in because she no longer lived.

May 6

I have developed a superstition that if I don't look at the statue of liberty from the subway window at the exact moment the train is above ground and the statue is in the distance, whatever appointment I'm going to will end badly. Every glimpse I catch of the statue and its gaudy, eighties gold flame, feels like good luck. Fifty years ago, the ~~flame~~ flame was still made of stained glass. Up close, I saw the crown sitting above the face



and body modeled after both female and male references, the same spikes my middle-school crush wore in a mohawk.

After colliding with too many school groups, I called it quits on my tourist trips.

"Although thoughts only take place in the, inaccessible sphere of our aloneness, their very occurrence is a constant witness to the presence of others"
-- Stephen Batchelor,
Alone With Others